

CLAIMS

We claim:

1) THERMAL TRANSFER PRINTER/LABELLER SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR CASSETTES OR READY-TO-USE PACKAGES comprising an enclosing structure (1), complete with motor drives, for printing ribbons (3) and receiving ribbons (9, 9'), which may be joined in a thermal printhead (7), characterised in that the spool of printing ribbon (3), the spool of receiving ribbon (9, 9') or both, are contained in special cassettes (2), (14). (15), or ready-to-use packages, the cassette (2), of a shape and size depending on the types of ribbon, may suitably accommodate the take-up core (4) and spool of printing ribbon (3), the core and spool have a central hole through which a driving device (5) may be inserted, the cassette (14) has an asymmetric conformation such as to contain the spool of the ribbon medium (9') and the take-up core (13), the core and spool have a central hole through which a driving device (10) may be inserted, the cassette (15) has a composite form, distinct from the previous ones, in order that its front part may contain the spool of printing ribbon (3) and take-up core (4) while the rear part holds the spool of the ribbon medium (9) and take-up core (13), which similarly have a central hole to accommodate the devices (5) and (10) for the respective drives.

Further characterised in that the printing apparatus (1) features two externally motorised driving devices (5) and (10), which also serve as a guide for introducing the cassettes (2), (14), (15), and moreover features a thermal printhead (7) whose position may be adjusted via a device (6) with which it is integral, a series of idle rollers (11), a series of motorised rollers (12) and a rubber-coated drive roller (8).

2) THERMAL TRANSFER PRINTER/LABELLER SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR CASSETTES OR READY-TO-USE PACKAGES according to the main claim, characterised in that the invention includes control devices for locking the drive mechanisms (5,10), and devices (6) for rewinding and checking the ribbons for wear.

3) THERMAL TRANSFER PRINTER/LABELLER SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR CASSETTES OR READY-TO-USE PACKAGES according to the main claim, characterised in that the specific devices for picking up, feeding out and positioning the ribbons are, in all four versions, configured exclusively for ribbons contained in cassettes or equivalent quick-load packages.

4) THERMAL TRANSFER PRINTER/LABELLER SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR CASSETTES OR READY-TO-USE PACKAGES according to the main claim, characterised in that the "ready-to-use package" essentially comprises a spool and take-up core rigidly connected by means of any rigid support.